

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 84ISLAMA004153

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ACTION RP-10

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 AID-00 IO-15 NEA-06 SSO-00  
HHS-04 /036 W

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O 290428Z FEB 84  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2790  
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI  
AMCONSUL LAHORE POUCH  
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR POUCH

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 04153

DEPT FOR RP/DAS DEWEY AND R/P BLANEY AND W.HARRIS

E.O. 12356: OADR:GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: UNHCR REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE CDC ASSISTANCE

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. ON FEBRUARY 26 PHYSICIAN-IN-CHARGE OF  
UNHCR HEALTH PROGRAMS/PAKISTAN RELATED TO REOFFS HIS  
EXTREME CONCERN OVER RECENT REPORT (MADE AVAILABLE  
TO UNHCR EARLIER THIS MONTH) DEPICTING HEALTH  
CONDITIONS AMONG PAKISTAN'S OVER 2 MILLION IN-CAMP  
REFUGEES. UNHCR-COMMISSIONED SURVEY INDICATES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SITUATION AMONG AFGHANS IN CAMPS HERE  
TO BE MUCH WORSE THAN HAD BEEN SURMISED.

END SUMMARY.

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3. BACKGROUND. UNHCR OFFICIALS TOLD US THAT SURVEY  
IN QUESTION WAS CONDUCTED IN TWO OF PAKISTAN'S FOUR  
PROVINCES, THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE (NWFP)  
AND BALUCHISTAN, AMONG 1640 HOUSEHOLDS, IN THE PERIOD  
MARCH TO JUNE, 1983. INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED TO  
COLLECT DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC DATA. ANTHRO-  
POMETRIC MEASUREMENTS WERE MADE TO ASCERTAIN CHILD-  
REN'S NUTRITIONAL STATUS. IN ADDITION, LABORATORY

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EXAMINATIONS TO DETERMINE PREVALENCE OF MALARIA, ANEMIA, T.B. (SPUTA), PARASITES AND WORMS WERE UNDERTAKEN. AMONG THE MORE STRIKING FINDINGS AS REPORTED IN THE SURVEY ARE THE FOLLOWING: OF 1,240 HOUSEHOLDS (AVERAGE 6.2 PERSONS) INTERVIEWED IN THE NWFP, 308 INFANT MORTALITIES WERE REPORTED. IN BALUCHISTAN, AN INCREDIBLE 240 INFANT DEATHS WERE REPORTED FROM AMONG 404 HOUSEHOLDS (6.7 PERSONS AVERAGE) POLLED. MATERNAL DEATH RATES WERE ALSO ALARMINGLY HIGH, AS REPORTED.

4. REQUIREMENT. UNHCR REQUIRES IMMEDIATE COMPETENT REPETITION OF THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ITS SURVEY FOCUSING ON PREVALENCE OF MALNUTRITION, AND MAJOR DISEASES IN SAME TIME PERIOD ( MARCH, APRIL) OF ORIGINAL SURVEY. UNHCR OFFICIALS INDICATED STAFFING NEEDS: TWO CDC EPIDEMIOLOGISTS WITH STRONG BACKGROUND IN SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND STATISTICS, AND ONE NUTRITIONIST. TEAM SHOULD INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE FEMALE TO COPE WITH CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS TO INTERVIEWING AFGHAN WOMEN. AN ALL FEMALE TEAM MIGHT BE MOST APPROPRIATE. IN ANY CASE UNHCR SAID THEY WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR WHOMEVER ATLANTA COULD SPARE.

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5. TIMING. TEAM IS NEEDED NOW. IF THE SURVEY WHICH PROMPTS ALARM IS TO BE PROPERLY EVALUATED, CDC PERSONNEL SHOULD ARRIVE PAKISTAN WITHIN TWO WEEKS. THIS WOULD ALLOW EIGHT TO TEN WEEKS AT VARIOUS SITES TO COMPLETE PARALLEL NUTRITIONAL AND MAJOR DISEASE INCIDENCE/PREVALENCE SURVEYS AMONG SAME SUBJECT POPULATION PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF REFUGEES' SUMMER SEASONAL MIGRATIONS IN EARLY MAY. CDC'S COMPARATIVE DATA WOULD ALLOW UNHCR TO DEVISE AND IMPLEMENT TIMELY MODIFICATIONS BEST TO SERVE REFUGEE NEEDS.

6. UNHCR SUPPORT. UNHCR IS AWARE THAT CDC ASSISTANCE IS IN CONSIDERABLE DEMAND AND THAT IT DOES NOT COME EASILY, ESPECIALLY ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. CHARGE WALZER HAS PLEDGED FULLY TO BACKSTOP TEAM'S IN-COUNTRY NEEDS. SUPPORT WILL INCLUDE IN-COUNTRY TRANSPORT, (FIELD) LODGING ARRANGEMENTS, INTERPRETERS, LOCAL FACILITATORS/INFORMANTS, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, LABORATORY BACK-UP. UNHCR WILL OBTAIN GOP APPROVAL OF CDC ASSISTANCE AND WILL OBTAIN PASSES NECESSARY TO VISIT REFUGEE CAMPS IN SENSITIVE BORDER AREAS ONCE NAMES OF CDC EXPERTS ARE PROVIDED.

7. COMMENT. WE GIVE FULL CREDENCE TO THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS SITUATION. IF CURRENT SURVEY FINDINGS ARE VERIFIED

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BY CDC, A THOROUGH REVAMPING OF UNHCR'S HEALTH  
DELIVERY SYSTEMS COULD BE REQUIRED TO PREVENT  
FURTHER LOSS OF LIVES.

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WE BELIEVE HE WOULD NOT  
MAKE APPEAL FOR EXTRAORDINARY ASSISTANCE FROM CDC UNLESS  
THE SITUATION REQUIRED IT. ANNUALLY SEVERAL MILLION  
DOLLARS OF RP FUNDS FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES IS APPORTIONED  
DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY FOR HEALTH CARE DELIVERY.  
A TIMELY RESPONSE TO UNHCR'S APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE  
COULD WELL MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS  
FOR YEARS TO COME. END COMMENT.

ACTION REQUESTED: GIVEN SOURCES OF APPEAL FOR  
HELP, WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT MAKE PROMPT  
EFFORT TO ENLIST IMMEDIATE CDC SUPPORT AS REQUESTED  
BY UNHCR.

USAID EPIDEMIOLOGIST, DR. CORNELIA DAVIS HAS  
READ FOREGOING CABLE AND CONCURS INVESTIGATION  
WARRANTED. HINTON  
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